

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Executive, O/RR DATE: 1 March 1951

FROM : Chief, D/G, O/RR *DOI Waiver Letter In ERU FILE*

SUBJECT: Foreign Names Staff Work for the Board on Geographic Names

REFERENCE: Letter from the Director of the Division of Geography, Dept. of Interior to [REDACTED] CIA Representative on the BGN, dated 13 February 1951.

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A. PROBLEM

1. The Director, Division of Geography of the Department of Interior, who is also Executive Secretary for the Board on Geographic Names, has submitted the reference letter and would appreciate a reply that reflects CIA opinion. The information in the following paragraphs is given as background for determining the content of a reply in case CIA wishes to go on record in regard to this subject.

B. BACKGROUND

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1. The appropriation for the Division of Geography, Department of Interior, for fiscal year 1950, was \$14,200. This Division comprises the Staff for the BGN. NIS funds in the amount of [REDACTED] in fiscal year 1950 were transferred to finance the foreign names work needed for NIS gazetteer production and name editing of NIS manuscripts.

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2. The Department of Interior was unable to obtain the appropriation of any funds for the Division of Geography for fiscal year 1951. Again, the NIS program financed the BGN for foreign names work for fiscal year 1951 in an amount of [REDACTED]. Some work is also being done for the Aeronautical Chart and Information Service, USAF, on transfer of working funds.

3. The BGN is not only responsible for standardizing foreign names but also domestic names for use by the U. S. Government. The Division of Geography has, of course, not been able to do much work on domestic names because of the lack of funds. During fiscal year 1951, it will be unable to do any work on domestic names, except for Alaska, since only NIS and ACS interests can be met.

4. Over the past several years the mapping agencies of the Government, who are dependent upon BGN for geographic name policy, have cooperated in the formulation of name policies and in the determination of name decisions. However, there have been serious disagreements on procedures for obtaining standardization of large numbers of names needed for map compilation. Each agency has a

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small geographic names research group closely tied in with map compilation units. Generally speaking, they do not feel that it is necessary for the Staff of the Board to verify each name they use but that the Board should concentrate on proper directions for the application of Board policy. There are many arguments pro and con regarding this general subject.

5. A representative on the Management Staff of the Department of Interior has made an extensive survey of the work of the Division of Geography and of the status of the BGN. He discussed the problem in detail with the CIA representative on the Board. The Director of the Division of Geography, with the Board's approval, submitted a budget estimate for fiscal year 1952 for \$595,000 which would permit the Board and its Staff to organize itself for meeting all government requirements for geographic name standardization and promulgation (excluding the editing of NIS manuscripts and issuance of NIS gazetteers which would continue to be paid for by transfer of NIS funds). The Bureau of the Budget did not accept this estimate and stated that, since a large portion of it related to foreign names, such funds should not be included in the appropriation of a civilian agency but should rather be paid from defense funds. It appears that the general feeling of the Department of Interior is that the Department should take steps to relieve itself of foreign names work. The Department of Interior's representative queried regarding the advisability of having a domestic names staff left in the U. S. Geological Survey of Interior and a foreign names staff in another agency, preferably the CIA, since foreign names work is a matter of common concern to State and the military services as well as to CIA. For your information, I believe that a preliminary draft of an Interior report is in the hands of the Bureau of the Budget in which it is suggested that CIA be given responsibility for foreign names standardization.

C. PRESENT SITUATION

1. As far as CIA is concerned, the foreign names work of the Staff, the formulation of policy by the Staff for approval by the Board, and the editing of manuscript material is conducted very satisfactorily under present conditions. Nearly all of the CIA requirements on the Board and on its Staff are those stemming from the NIS program. From CIA's immediate point of view, no change is necessary and, if made, might seriously disrupt the smooth functioning of the NIS publications schedule.

2. From a Government-wide point of view, it is possible that the domestic names work could be better handled under new direction within a mapping organization of a domestic agency and that the foreign names work could be placed advantageously in an agency concerned with foreign areas and with interest in the mapping field. The only possibilities that have been mentioned are the Department of State, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Army Map Service, and the CIA.

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3. Since foreign geographic names work is of common concern to the intelligence agencies and to the mapping organizations supporting them, there appears to be predominance of opinion that CIA might be the logical recipient, particularly in view of the fact that the NIS is by far the major user of the capabilities of present foreign names staff.

4. If CIA were to accept this responsibility, the first task would be to continue the staff work without interruption. The second task would be to obtain agreement of the other mapping organizations on procedures which would permit efficient standardization of foreign names with minimum duplication of foreign name research. Because of built-up animosities toward the BGN and particularly toward operations of the foreign names staff in Interior, this second task would be a difficult one.

D. SUGGESTIONS

1. In regard to the reference letter, the following preliminary suggestions are offered:

- a. Final responsibility for geographic names standardization within the U. S. Government should remain with a single Cabinet member with the support of a single Board on Geographic Names. The present law provides for this under the Secretary of Interior.
- b. The CIA, at most, should furnish only the foreign names staff for the Board, but it should retain full responsibility and authority for effecting proper coordination, in this staff work, with other interested agencies and should develop, with the cooperation of these agencies, efficient procedures for providing the staff work necessary for standardizing foreign names.
- c. The public promulgation of standardized foreign names and name decisions should be the responsibility of the Board and issuances should be in the name of the Board. The Department whose Secretary is responsible for name standardization should be indicated as publishing authority, even though CIA might assume costs of publication.
- d. The Board should have a central office with a skeleton full-time staff, to receive requests from civilian agencies and the public and to maintain contacts with foreign countries, always acting in the name of the Board. This office should have no authority over the foreign names staff. Part of the expenses of this central office could be shared by CIA.

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f. If the foreign names staff were to be taken over by CIA, this Agency would, of course, provide space for the staff and for meetings of the Foreign Names Committee and would maintain necessary records and supporting data.

E. ACTION

1. It is requested that the opinion of CIA be ascertained in regard to an appropriate answer for the reference letter.

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Enclosure:

Ltr. from the Director, Division
of Geography, Dept. of Interior

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ORIGINAL DOCUMENT MISSING PAGE(S):

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